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Communist Violations of the Vietnam and Laos Settlement Agreements and Related Developments

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Forty-Fifth Report

**COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF THE VIETNAM AND LAOS
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS***

**(This report covers the period
from 3 January through 8 January 1974)**

The Key Points

- North Vietnamese infiltration was brisk last week as eight new regular groups and eight special-purpose groups were detected.
- North Vietnamese supply shipments in southern North Vietnam decreased last week, but remained heavy in Laos. In Cambodia, the North Vietnamese have significantly increased their logistic support to the Khmer Communists.
- Major elements of the NVA 316th Division have withdrawn from northern Laos. In South Vietnam the deployment of another Communist regiment to Quang Duc Province has increased Communist forces in the area to some 4,000-5,000 men.
- The latest photography over North Vietnam shows a significant increase in the number of armored vehicles in the North Vietnamese Panhandle.

* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

Preface

This report is the forty-fifth in a series summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military supplies toward and into South Vietnam, (II) Communist-initiated combat activity in violation of the Vietnam and Laos settlement agreements, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

DETAILS

I. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese Personnel and Military Supplies***Personnel Infiltration***

1. The rate of combat infiltration increased again last week with the detection of three new regular infiltration groups at the top of the pipeline in North Vietnam and five additional regular groups farther south in the system. This is the highest number of regular groups detected during a one-week period thus far in the current dry season. Six of these groups, with almost 3,000 troops, are traveling to the B-3 Front while the other two, with more than 1,000 troops, are bound for the COSVN area of South Vietnam. The detection of one of the COSVN-bound groups suggests that three other battalion-size combat groups with an estimated strength of 1,500 troops already have started, or soon will start, to that area.

2. Eight small special-purpose groups were observed moving toward South Vietnam during the past week. Six of these groups comprising about 225 personnel are en route to COSVN, while the other two with 25 specialists are being sent to the B-3 Front. All but one of these groups were detected in the southern part of the infiltration system.

3. Since mid-December, 61 special-purpose groups with more than 2,000 personnel -- virtually all of them en route to South Vietnam -- have been detected moving southward in the infiltration pipeline. This is the largest number of specialists observed infiltrating since March 1973 when some 2,000 personnel were sent south. About one-fourth of the recent special-purpose infiltration has been high-ranking civilian and military cadre, and most of the remainder are civilian administrative and other types of skilled personnel. The commitment of this many specialists since mid-December indicates that one of Hanoi's primary goals continues to be the rebuilding of the Communist political apparatus in South Vietnam.

4. The level of combat infiltration thus far in the present dry season is 19,000 fewer than during the 1972-73 cycle. Moreover, despite recent increases in the movement of troops to South Vietnam, almost 60% of the troops who have left North Vietnam since 1 September have been sent to southern Laos and contiguous border areas. The shift of infiltration away from those areas in recent weeks, however, suggests that the North Vietnamese now are focusing on their mid-November plan to increase infiltration through southern Laos to COSVN and the B-3 Front. Of the 12,500 troops who have started toward these areas since then, at least 8,000 already have passed through or are now transiting the Laotian Panhandle.

**Comparative Starts of Troops
from North Vietnam, by Destination
1 September - 8 January**

	1972-73	1973-74
Total	58,000	39,000
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	18,500	2,000
MR 5	7,000	2,000
B-3 Front	9,000	5,000
COSVN	13,500	7,500
Southern Laos/MR 559	10,000	22,500

Redeployments

5. The first significant withdrawal of North Vietnamese combat troops from northern Laos since the cease-fire occurred during December 1973. According to COMINT, the Headquarters of the NVA 316th Infantry Division and two of its subordinate regiments -- the 88th and 148th -- moved from the Plaine des Jarres area of Laos into adjacent Nghe An Province of North Vietnam. The redeployment of these combat units marks the first time since late 1967 that there has not been an integral NVA division in northern Laos. Currently, the 174th Regiment of the 316th Division and two other independent infantry regiments -- 335th and 866th -- are still operating in the Plaine des Jarres area. The 316th Division withdrawals probably reflect, in part, some satisfaction by the North Vietnamese with the Laos cease-fire accords and a North Vietnamese belief that their position in northern Laos can be maintained with fewer troops.

6. COMINT of 6 January has located the NVA 174th Infantry Regiment of the NVA 5th Division in western Quang Duc Province of Military Region 2. Located in eastern Tay Ninh Province of MR 3 as recently as 10 December 1973, the regiment -- with 1,000 troops -- complements the movement of the 205th and 271st Regiments and other supporting sapper and armor elements to Quang Duc Province during the last quarter of 1973. With this deployment, there is now a Communist divisional equivalent of combat forces, totaling some 4,000 to 5,000 men, in the province. The Communists' decision to deploy another combat regiment into MR 2 appears to have been for the purpose of providing additional protection for the new western supply corridor which will transit Quang Duc Province into northern MR 3. Map 515529 shows the current distribution of Communist and South Vietnamese combat forces by military region.

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

		MR 1	
VC/NVA ¹	RVNAF ²	VC/NVA	RVNAF
185,000	320,000	87,000	89,000
		325th	VNMC
		324B	Airborne
		304th	1st
		711th	2nd
		2nd	3rd
			Regional Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

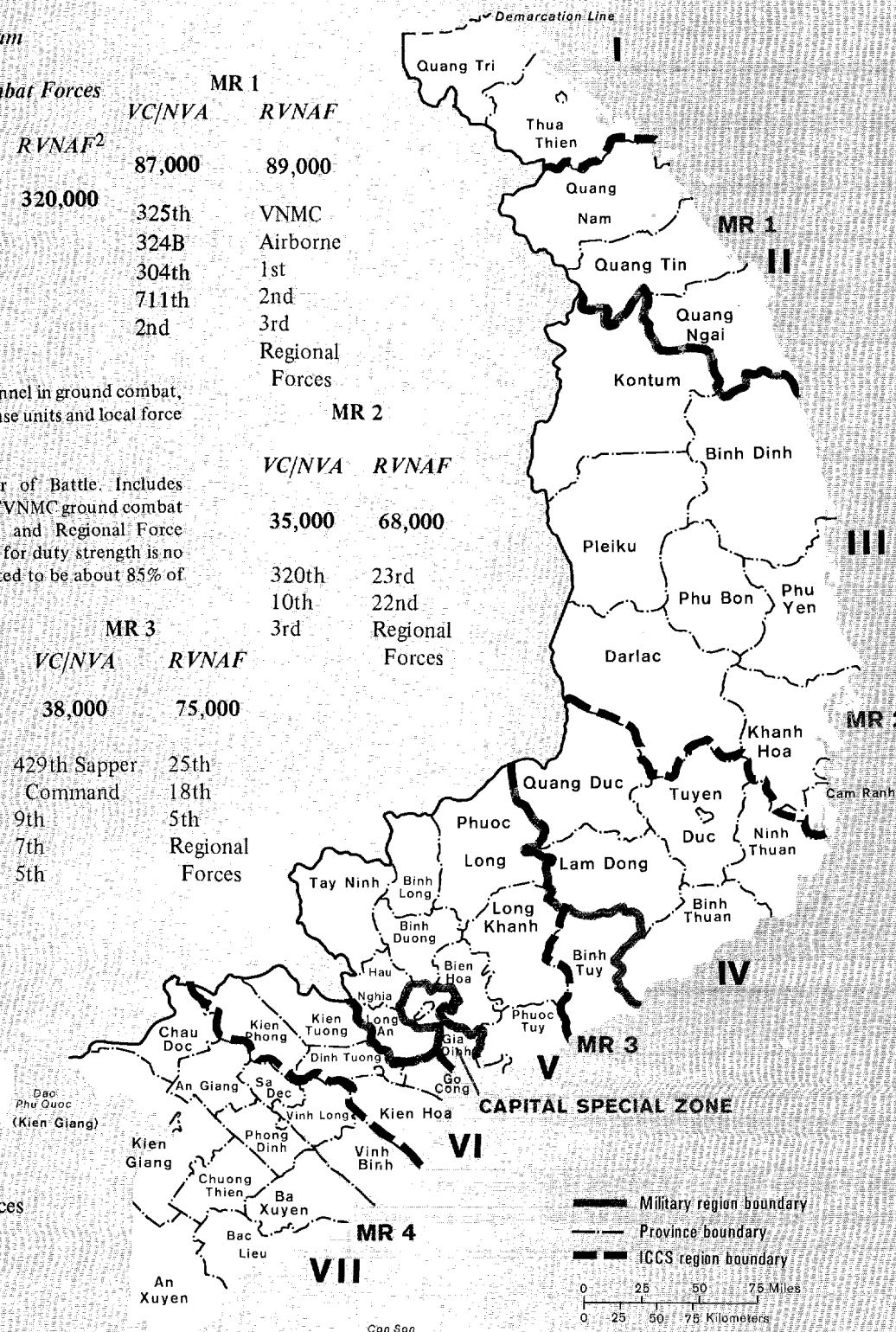
2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.

MR 3

VC/NVA	RVNAF
38,000	75,000
429th Sapper Command	25th
9th	18th
7th	5th
5th	Regional Forces

MR 4

VC/NVA	RVNAF
25,000	88,000
1st	21st
	9th
	7th
	Regional Forces



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Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies

North Vietnam

7. Following several weeks of intense activity, the flow of supplies into and through southern North Vietnam has at least temporarily decreased. COMINT intercepts from logistic units and major storage areas in the Vinh and Quang Khe areas indicated that supply shipments decreased to some 100-200 tons per day. For example, a wrap-up report for 1-3 January indicated that 440 tons of cargo was shipped between logistic units in the Vinh and Quang Khe areas. The following day a storage area near Vinh reported that it had received some 70 tons of gasoline and dispatched 35 tons of the same commodity. As in previous weeks, ordnance constituted the majority of cargo identified, although food, petroleum, and engineering equipment also were shipped.

Laos

8. In contrast to the decline in supply movements in North Vietnam, COMINT and photography reflected heavy vehicle movement into and through Laos. One COMINT intercept, for example, reported that 170 vehicles had entered Laos through Ban Karai Pass on 2 January alone (see Map 562332). Additionally, for the second straight week, heavy truck convoy movement - mostly westbound - was seen on Route 9 between the Khe Sanh airstrip and the junction of Route 9 and the main Laotian north-south route. [] the first large concentration was observed, with 252 vehicles noted on the Laotian side of the border, 222 of which were heading west. Subsequent coverage shows that this heavy volume of traffic is continuing, the latest sightings [] showing 73 westbound trucks just east of Khe Sanh, and another 90 vehicles west of Khe Sanh, also heading towards Laos. Although it cannot be confirmed at this time, the heavy westbound supply flow on Route 9 could reflect shipments originating in Dong Ha, an offloading point for seaborne deliveries from North Vietnam. Sections of Route 9 have been reported closed in past weeks, but a 6 January intercept reported that the road was open to all types of vehicles.

9. Farther south in the Laos Panhandle, photography showed continued heavy truck traffic on the dual lane corridor exiting through the tri-border area. Southbound movement appeared more pronounced this week, with sightings of more than 100 southbound vehicles noted in the vicinity of Ban Phone on several different days. Some of this traffic was also reflected in COMINT, as evidenced in a 7 January intercept which indicated that 110 vehicles were moving along Route 96 south of Ban Phone.



South Vietnam

10. Recent reconnaissance over the Communist highlands supply corridor extending along the western border of South Vietnam showed light vehicle movement, with construction and repair activity also noted. These repairs and improvements will prepare the corridor for the heavy use expected after the current rainy season ends next month. In the same area, COMINT also reflected a light level of logistic activity which appeared to be related to road repair or local supply distribution.

Cambodia

11. The North Vietnamese have significantly escalated their logistic support to the Khmer Communists (KC). A series of intercepted KC messages since late December indicates that the North Vietnamese have initiated the delivery of 900 tons of material and 296 trucks to the KC -- by far the largest transfer ever noted -- in exchange for the KC sale of 5,000 tons of rice to the North Vietnamese. To date, three shipments -- received by the KC between 23 and 29 December -- have been observed, comprising 92 trucks and 156 tons of ammunition, small arms and crew-served weapons, explosives, and communications equipment. The KC messages also indicate that the North Vietnamese have agreed to help with the countrywide distribution of these supplies in return for certain transit rights through southwestern Cambodia.

12. The first deliveries probably will start to find their way into the hands of KC line units within a few weeks. Together with existing stocks in forward positions and rear area warehouses, this new materiel should allow the KC to sustain anticipated offensive activity through the dry season with few shortages. In fact, commanders in several key regions have been authorized to form a total of about 20 new battalions as a result of these deliveries. Moreover, the influx of the trucks should greatly enhance the KC's ability to resupply their units in the field, a prominent shortcoming during their offensive against Phnom Penh last summer.

The 1973-74 Dry Season Supply Effort

13. The Communists' 1973-74 dry season supply effort is now in full swing and in many ways it is similar in scope and intensity to that of previous years. As in past dry seasons, the supply push is a major effort which will go far beyond merely replacing the supplies consumed by Communist forces within South Vietnam during the past several months. Stockpiles of all categories of supplies will be augmented. Since early November, for example, Communist units in the Vinh area have handled about 5,000 tons of ordnance -- based on planned delivery schedules -- including ammunition for virtually every weapon in the Communists'

arsenal. The Communist supply movements into Laos from southern North Vietnam probably will peak in the next month or so as January and February have been the traditional period for maximum input into Laos. Beyond February the emphasis will shift to the delivery of supplies to South Vietnam and Cambodia.

14. The 1973/74 effort, however, probably will fall somewhat short of last year's campaign. Once it became evident that a cease-fire was near during October 1972, Hanoi's logisticians began an unprecedented drive to move goods south before the actual signing of the agreement. During November and December 1972 alone, the North Vietnamese moved at least 20,000 tons of ordnance southward through Vinh, a figure that was not matched this fall.

15. Some other trends probably will emerge in the months ahead. Although no final destination has been revealed for most of the cargo moving in Laos, a substantial part of it will probably go to the COSVN area. These forces have not been supplied through Laos since late last spring; consequently, stockpiles in MRs 3 and 4 are much smaller than in other areas of the country. Communist forces in MRs 1 and 2 received large quantities of supplies over the western supply corridor during the summer and fall and are in a much stronger position logistically than the Communist forces in the southern half of the country.

II. Communist-Initiated Combat Activity in South Vietnam and Laos

South Vietnam

16. In South Vietnam the total number of Communist-initiated cease-fire violations reported by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces since 27 January 1973, since 15 June 1973, and for the past week (2-8 January 1974) are shown below:

Military Region	Total Since 27 January Cease-fire		Total Since 15 June Cease-fire		Last Week (2-8 Jan 74)	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
Total	4,418	29,355	2,049	15,400	50 (57)¹	456 (606)¹
MR 1	1,552	5,679	527	2,320	12	46
MR 2	732	4,852	468	2,998	6	108
MR 3	679	5,141	277	2,565	13	71
MR 4	1,455	13,683	777	7,517	19	231

1. Figures in parentheses denote totals of the previous week.

17. Some of these violations may have been initiated by South Vietnamese forces rather than Communist forces, and it is impossible in all cases to determine the actual instigator. The tabulation above and the charts following the Annex, however, show fairly accurately the trend in the amount of combat that has occurred in South Vietnam since the cease-fire. The fact that a combat incident occurred at a particular time and place is generally reported accurately by the South Vietnamese, even though the question of who started it may not always be treated objectively. Operational reports since 19 December, however, have attempted to distinguish between Communist and friendly-initiated violations. Only those violations designated as Communist-initiated are reported in the above tabulation.

Laos

18. There was no significant military activity in Laos during the past week.

III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

Results of Recent Photography of North Vietnam

19. [redacted] photo mission over North Vietnam shows a substantial increase since [redacted] in tanks parked in several cleared areas located some 20 miles south of Thanh Hoa. This latest photography showed a total of 103 armored vehicles – 85 light and medium tanks, 12 armored personnel carriers (APC), and 6 unidentified vehicles – in three cleared areas, compared with 47 tanks and 17 APCs in two areas [redacted] DIA interpretation of the same area confirms a sizable increase in total armored vehicles observed but only a slight increase in the tank count over [redacted] photography. The DIA count of 95 armored vehicles includes 57 tanks, 14 APCs, and 22 unidentified and 2 possible armored vehicles. The nearby Cong Phu rail spur, the probable offloading point for these vehicles, showed no activity [redacted] Coverage of both the Thanh Hoa and Vinh rail yards, north and south of Cong Phu, revealed no evidence of armored vehicles, precluding any identification of the possible origin of the additional tanks now parked near Cong Phu. Initial signs of construction of several permanent structures and possible water wells in the tank storage areas suggest that these areas may develop into a permanent armor training facility.

20. [redacted] photographs revealed some 20 Soviet ZSU-23-4 self-propelled antiaircraft artillery (AAA) guns

in a training area 9 miles west of Ninh Binh. This is the largest number ever photographed in the country and the farthest south the weapon has ever been noted. The quadmounted 23-mm ZSU-23-4 with on-carriage fire control has been noted in North Vietnam since mid-1972. It is the country's most sophisticated AAA weapon. The ZSU-23-4 may be assigned to a few AAA regiments in the North Vietnamese Panhandle in the near future, but thus far there is no indication that it will be deployed elsewhere in Indochina.

ANNEX

INFILTRATION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE PERSONNEL
TO THE SOUTH

1. Between 4 and 8 January, Groups 2043, 2054, and 3010 were noted in the Binh Tram (BT) 8 area near Vinh, starting toward COSVN and the B-3 Front. Each of these groups had a strength of more than 500 troops. The detection of Group 2043 indicates that some 1,500 additional troops in Groups 2040, 2041, and 2042 have already been dispatched or will soon start the journey south. On 7 January, Groups 3091, 3092, 3093, 3094, and 3095 were detected in the Group 472 area of the Laotian Panhandle. These designators are far out of numerical sequence with other recently observed 3xxx-series groups, and, although they may have been reported incorrectly, the groups are considered to be valid. In addition, one special-purpose group - M356 with some 22 personnel - was detected at BT 8, while seven other small groups with a total strength of 228 were observed in the Group 472 area - M234, M239, M254, M259, M354, Y240, and Y256.

2. Since the 15 June "second cease-fire," some 49,000 North Vietnamese have infiltrated southward, including some 44,000 combat troops and nearly 5,000 specialists. Since the 27 January Paris Agreement, more than 99,000 personnel have infiltrated southward, including more than 88,000 combat troops and nearly 11,000 specialists. Over 74,000 have started south since 27 January, while 25,000 were in the pipeline moving southward as of that date. The following table shows the number of North Vietnamese infiltrators starting south, by month and destination, since 1 January 1973.

Number of Troops Entering the Pipeline Destined
for South Vietnam, Southern Laos, and Cambodia
Since 1 January 1973¹

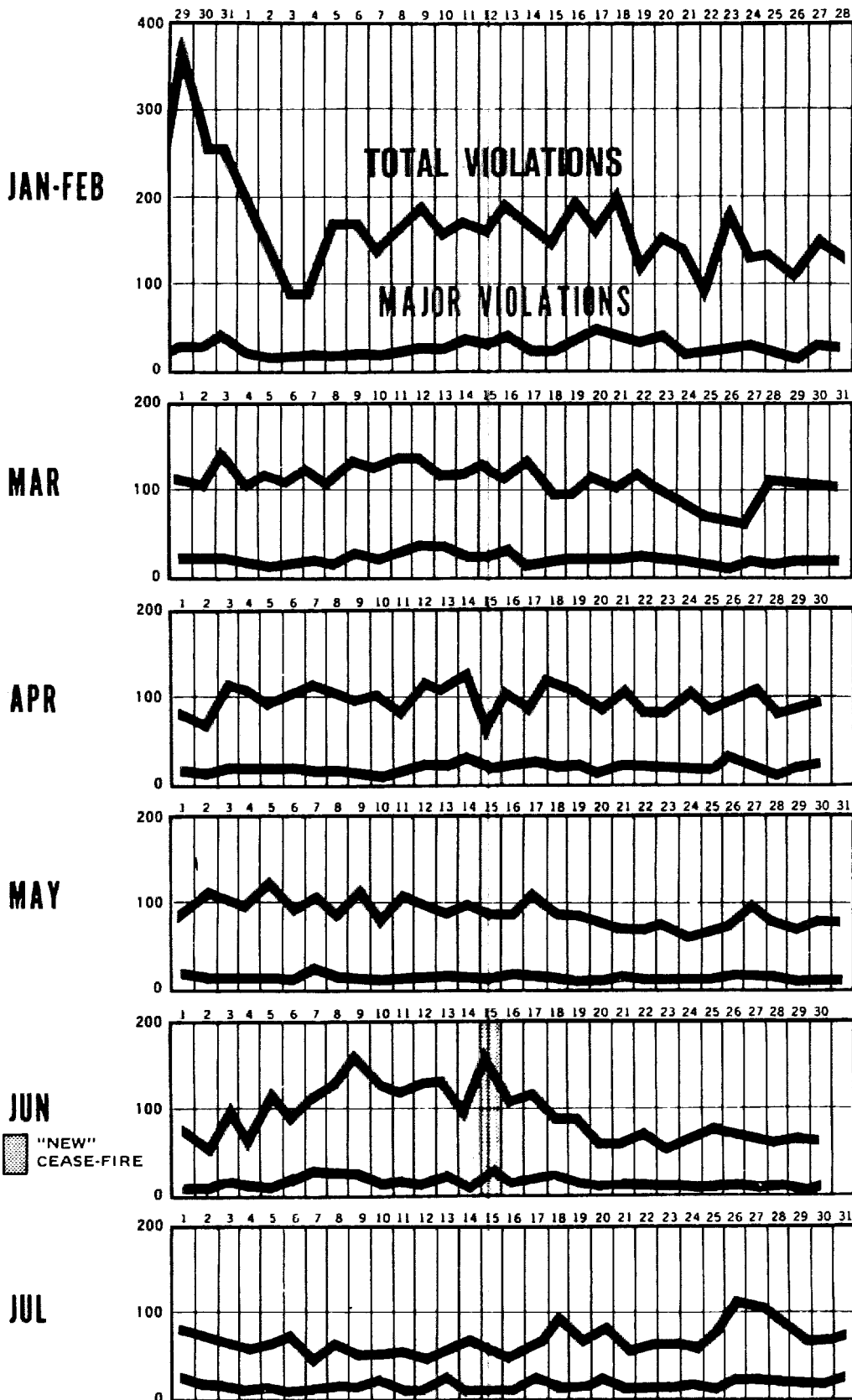
	COSVN	B-3 Front	MR 5	MR Tri- Thien-Hue	Southern Laos/ MR 559	Total
Total	20,500	10,500	9,000	14,000	26,500	80,500
1973						
Jan	7,000	5,000	4,000	2,500	....	18,500
Feb	5,000	500	....	1,500	1,000	8,000
Mar	....	....	....	1,000	....	1,000
Apr	1,000	....	....	....	....	1,000
May	....	....	....	7,000	....	7,000
Jun	....	....	....	....	1,500	1,500
Jul	....	....	3,000	....	....	3,000
Aug	....	....	....	....	1,500	1,500
Sep	....	....	2,000	2,000	3,000	7,000
Oct	....	....	....	....	14,000	14,000
Nov	1,000	1,000	....	....	5,500	7,500
Dec	3,500	1,000	....	....	....	4,500
1974						
Jan 1-8	3,000	3,000	....	....	....	6,000

1. Excludes special-purpose personnel. The totals are rounded to the nearest 500.



CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF

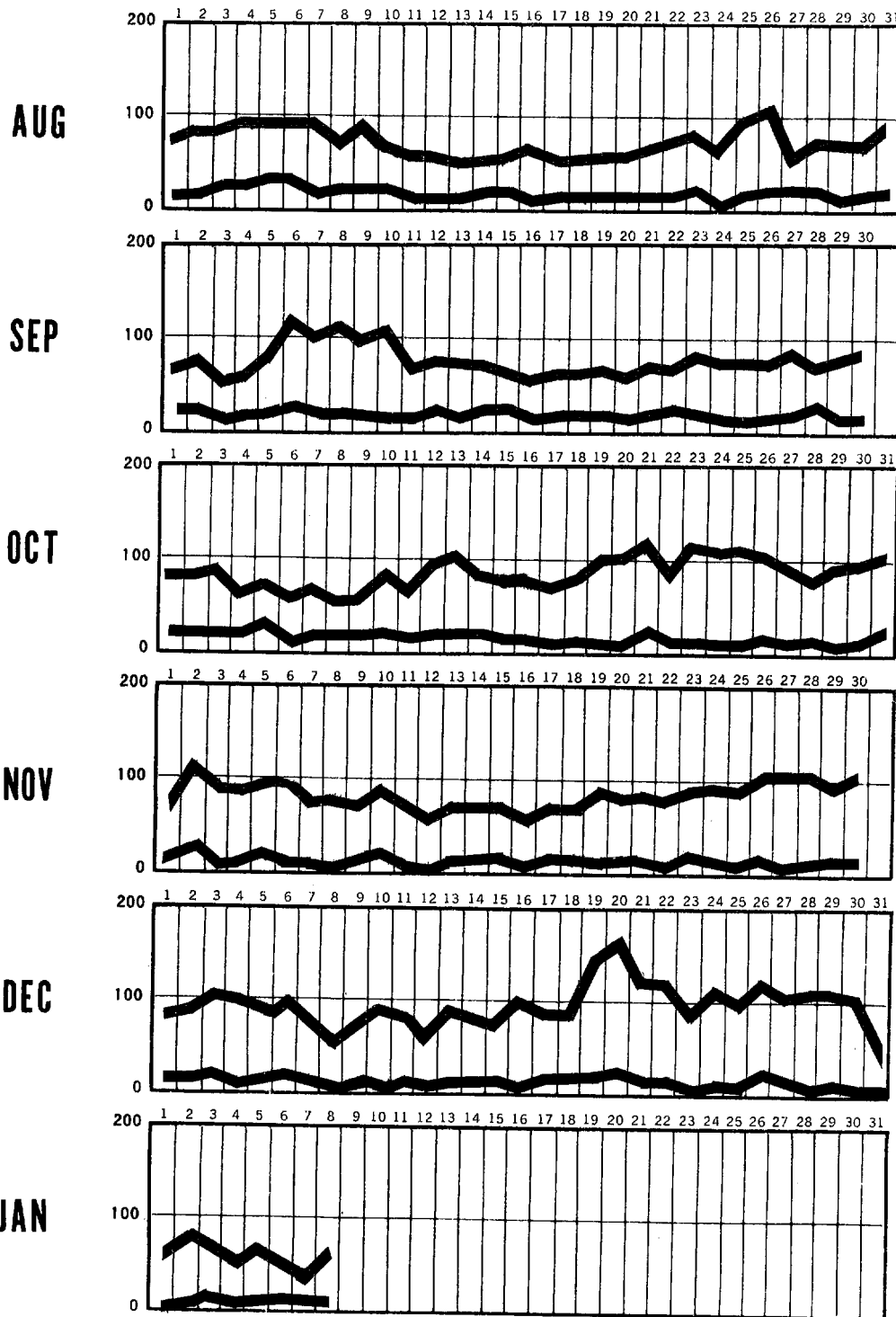
(28 JANUARY THROUGH 31 JULY 1973)





CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF

(1 AUGUST 1973 TO THE PRESENT)



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